

Comments from the March of Dimes

8.2.06

DMAS revitalization committee re: **Prenatal Care Coverage**

- I am Sara Long, Director of Program Services for the Virginia Chapter of the March of Dimes. I want to discuss prenatal care coverage for pregnant women in Virginia.
- The March of Dimes believes that prenatal, delivery and postpartum services should be provided to every pregnant woman. Because women who receive prenatal care generally have better birth outcomes, prenatal care is extremely cost effective.
- Appropriate maternity care is critical to ensuring that every new baby is born as healthy as possible. Women who receive prenatal care are more likely to have access to services that identify problems early and may help improve the health of both mothers and babies.
- The March of Dimes estimates that 15% of women of childbearing age in Virginia are uninsured.
- The March of Dimes hopes the committee will recommend expanding access to prenatal care for low-income women by increasing eligibility for FAMIS Moms to 200% of the federal poverty level, which is currently at 166% of FPL.
- In addition, the March of Dimes proposes that two provisions be added: to provide FAMIS Moms coverage up to three months prior to the date of application and to provide automatic eligibility for all newborns of women enrolled in FAMIS Moms. An alternative to the second provision would be retroactive coverage for newborns that apply for FAMIS a few months after birth.
- Thank you for this opportunity to comment.
- Sara Long, Director of Program Services
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